

REMARKS

I. Introduction

The Final Action rejects claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). In this response, the Applicant demonstrates that the Final Action failed to establish a prima facie case for rejecting claims 1-20 as obvious. In light of these arguments, Applicant respectfully asks the Examiner to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections. Claims 1-20 remain pending in the present application.

II. Arguments

The Final Action rejects claims 1-20 as obvious in light Hedberg et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,026,505 (hereinafter *Hedberg*), and Proebsting, U.S. Patent No. 6,137,157 (hereinafter *Proebsting*). However, the Applicant respectfully reminds the Examiner that M.P.E.P. § 2143 requires the Final Action to establish three criteria in order to establish a prima facie case for obviousness. First, the Final Action must provide some suggestion or motivation to combine teachings the Action proposes to combine found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. Second, the combination the Action proposes must have inspired a reasonable expectation of success. Third, the combination it self must teach or suggest each and every limitation of the rejected claims. Without conceding the either the first or second criteria, the Applicant respectfully asserts that the combination proposed by the Final Action fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of the rejected claims.

Claim 1 recites

determining if cells in each column group of the memory array are defective, wherein each said column group includes more than one column;

configuring column groups of said memory array to replace ones of said column groups which include more than a predetermined number of defective cells with spare column groups

The Applicant respectfully asserts that neither *Hedberg* nor *Proebsting* teach this limitation. Instead, both teach the replacement of a column based upon the number of

failures in that column. Thus, even if the combination of *Hedberg* or *Proebsting* does disclose replacing columns in groups (a point the Applicant does not concede), an individual column (whether in a group or not) is determined from the number of faults in that one column, and the combination still does not teach or suggest “configuring column groups . . . to replace . . . column groups which include more than a predetermined number of defective cells.” Therefore, the Final Action’s proposed combination fails to establish a *prima facie* case for rejecting claim 1, and the Applicant respectfully asks the Examiner to withdraw the U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of record.

Claim 9 recites “a column group reconfigurer for replacing ones of said column groups which contain a predetermined number of non-operational cells, wherein each said column group includes more than one column.” The Applicant respectfully asserts that neither *Hedberg* nor *Proebsting* teach this limitation either. As argued above, both *Hedberg* and *Proebsting* teach the replacement of a column based upon the number of failures in that column. Thus, the combination does not teach or suggest “replacing ones of said column groups which contain a predetermined number of non-operational cells.” Therefore, the Final Action’s proposed combination fails to establish a *prima facie* case for rejecting claim 9, and the Applicant respectfully asks the Examiner to withdraw the U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of record.

Claim 16 recites “configuring column groups of said memory array to replace ones of said column groups including said remaining defective cells, wherein each said column group includes more than one column.” The Applicant respectfully asserts that neither *Hedberg* nor *Proebsting* teach this limitation either. As argued above, both *Hedberg* and *Proebsting* teach the replacement of a column based upon the number of failures in that column. Thus, the combination does not teach or suggest “configuring column groups of said memory array to replace ones of said column groups including said remaining defective cells.” Therefore, the Final Action’s proposed combination fails to establish a *prima facie* case for rejecting claim 16, and the Applicant respectfully asks the Examiner to withdraw the U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of record.

Claims 2-8, 10-15, and 17-20 depend either directly or indirectly from claims 1, 9, and 16, respectively. Although claims 2-8, 10-15, and 17-20 contain limitations that make

them patentable in their own right, they are at least patentable because claims 1, 9, and 16 are patentable. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully asks the Examiner to withdraw the U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections to claims 2-8, 10-15, and 17-20 as well.

III. Conclusion

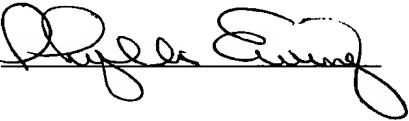
In view of the above response, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 08-2025, under Order No. 10004543-1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as Express Mail, Airbill No. EV482738140US, in an envelope addressed to: MS AF, Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date shown below.

Date of Deposit: November 19, 2004

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